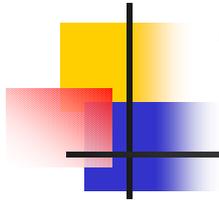


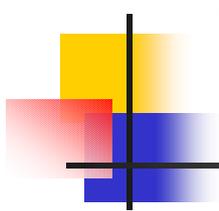
Sensation Seeking, Information Exposure, and Message Sensation Value

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Texas A&M University



Three T's

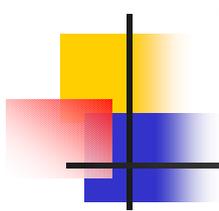
1. **T**heory: Activation Model
2. **T**rait: Sensation Seeking
3. **T**argeting: SENTAR



Theory

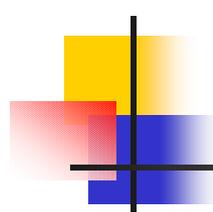
Activation Model of Information Exposure

- We seek or maintain a level of activation at which we feel most comfortable.
- Attention to a message is a function of
 - Need for stimulation or cognition
 - Stimulation provided by the message



Theory

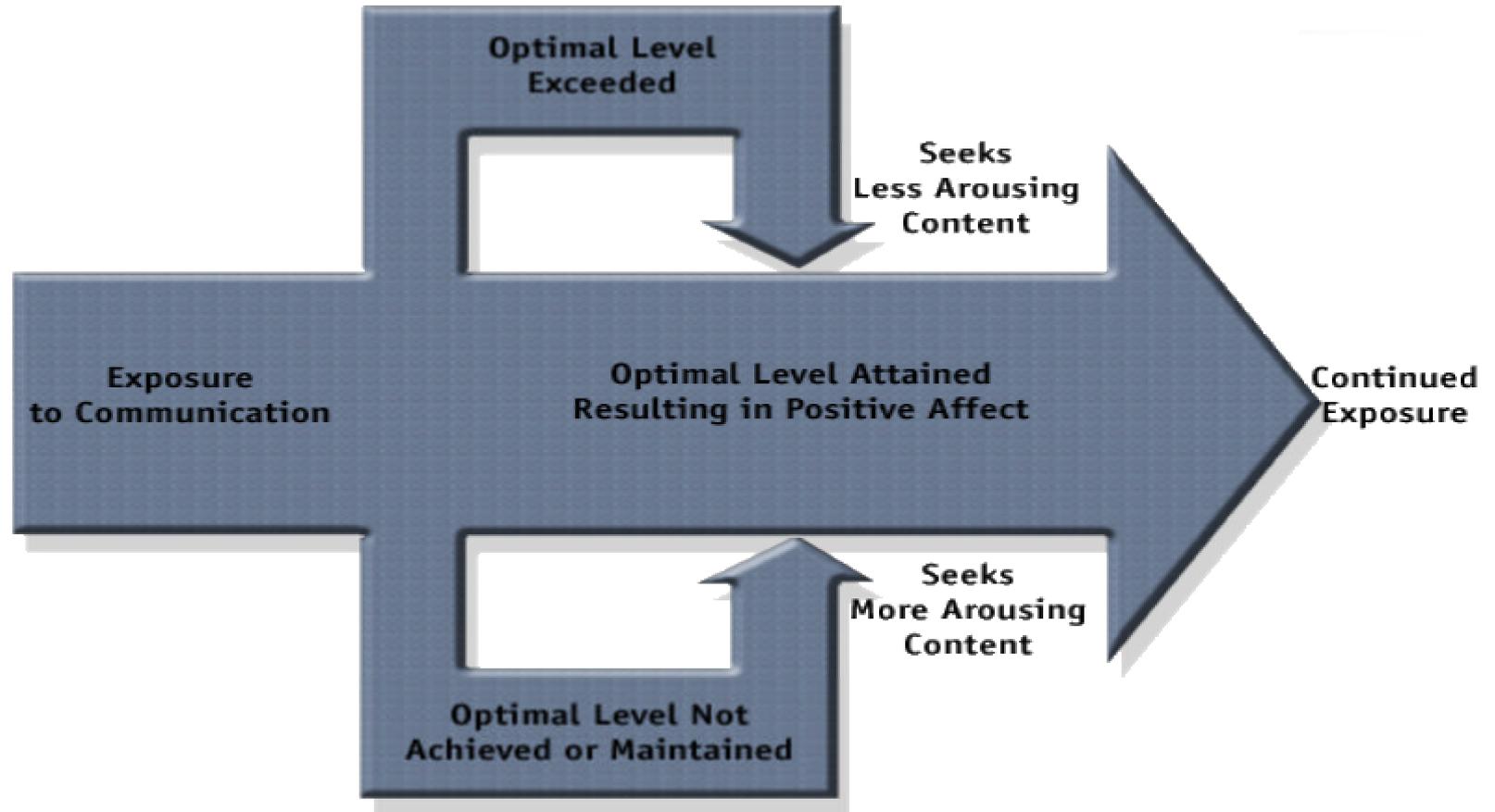
- Individuals will...
 - attend messages that fulfill need for activation
 - turn away from messages that fail to generate enough arousal for more exciting stimuli
 - turn away from messages that generate too much arousal for less exciting stimuli

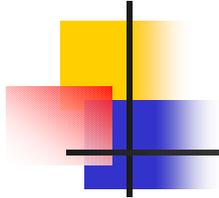


Theory (Aggie version)

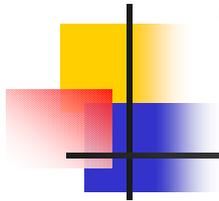
- Threshold of comfort
- Too much? Too little?
 - Seek alternatives
- Just right?
 - Do nothing.
- “Optimal” level of arousal

Activation Model





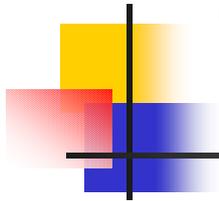
1. **T**heory: Activation Model
2. **T**rait: Sensation Seeking



Trait

Sensation Seeking

- A personality trait related to: “the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience” (Zuckerman, 1994, p. 27).

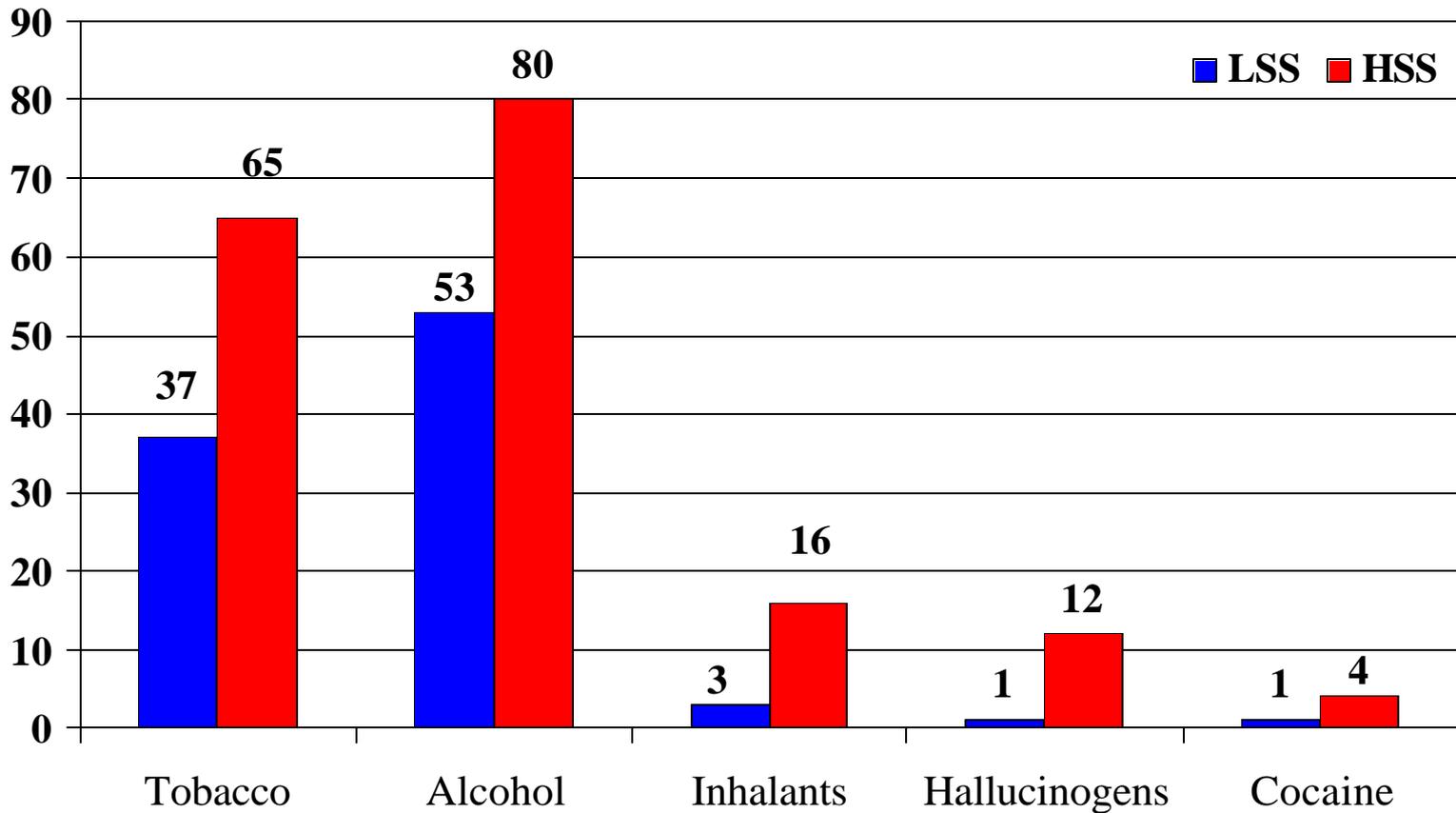


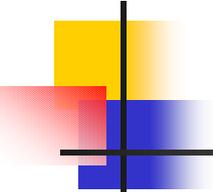
Trait

- “thrill-seekers”
- Individual difference variable, biological roots
- social, physical, and legal risks are stimulating
- aversion to boredom and routines
- bungee jumping, party-ers, live life in the “fast lane”
- risky sex, drug use

Sensation Seeking and Lifetime Substance Use

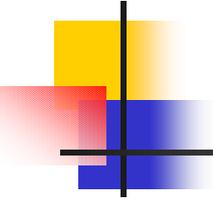
Fayette County Grades 8 to 11





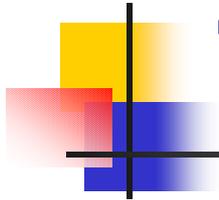
Biological Basis

- SS connected with activity in the mesolimbic dopamine pathway
 - Thought responsible for producing reinforcement.
 - Implicated as a critical link mediating drug reward.
- SS associated with levels of monoamine oxidase (MAO-B)
 - Brain-specific enzyme which breaks down dopamine and other neurotransmitters.
 - Lower levels of MAO-B, higher sensation seeking.



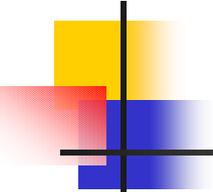
Biological Basis

- High SS are drawn to the stimulation and mood altering effects from drug use.
- High SS are responsive to drug effects than LSS.



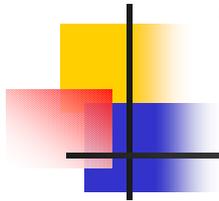
Trait

- High SS: distinct media preferences
- Message Sensation Value
 - The degree to which content and formal features of a message elicit sensory, affective, and arousal responses.
- HSS prefer high message sensation value
- HSS have higher “optimal arousal” level
- HSS prefer/need more stimulation



Message Characteristics

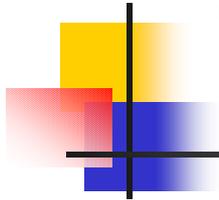
- highly novel
- creative
- intense
- dramatic
- physically arousing
- produces strong emotions
- graphic or explicit
- unconventional
- fast-paced
- suspenseful
- use of closeups
- strong sound efx
- strong visual efx
- not preachy



Trait

Message Sensation Value

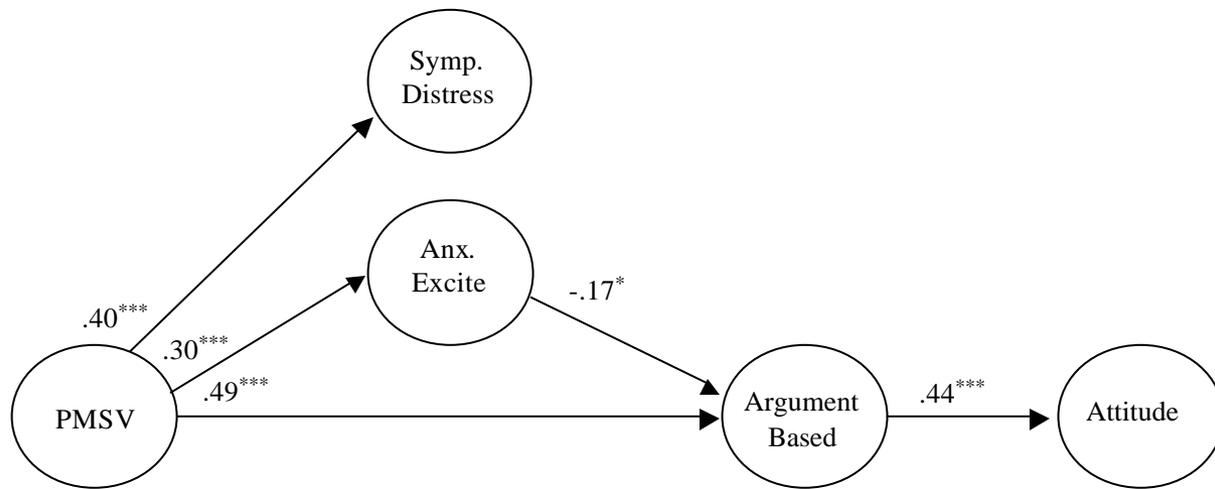
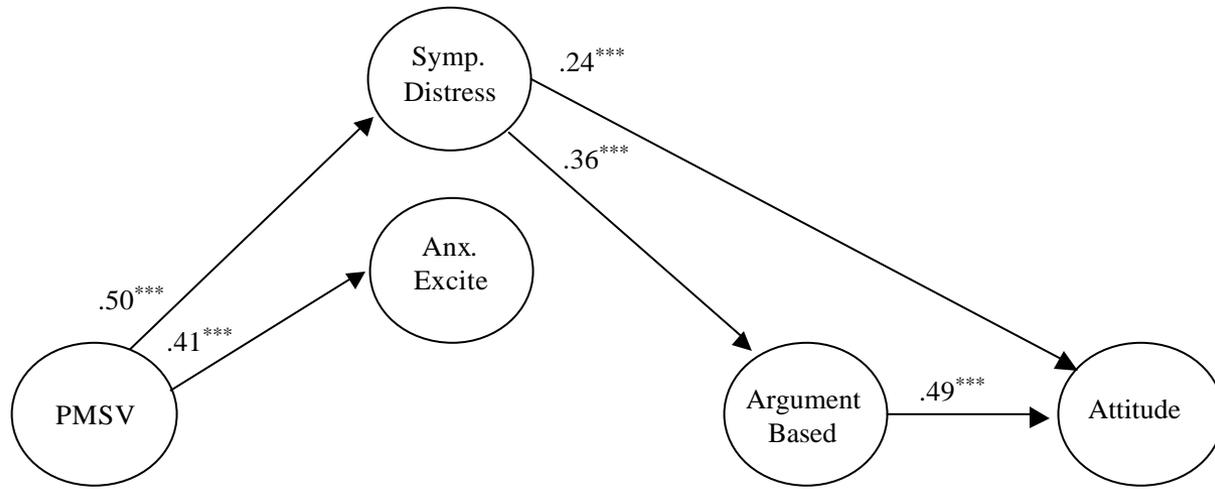
- Visual: cuts, special effects, slow motion, unusual colors, intense imagery
- Audio: sound saturation, music, sound effects
- Content: acted out, unexpected format, surprise/twist ending

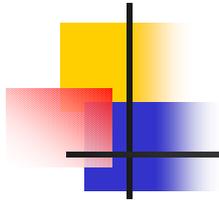


Trait

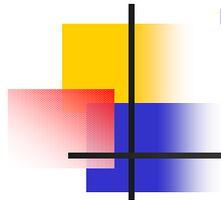
Perceived Message Sensation Value

- Novelty
- Emotional arousal
- Dramatic impact



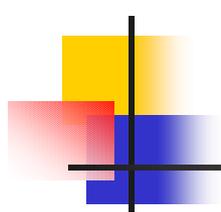


1. **T**heory: Activation Model
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Targeting: SENTAR

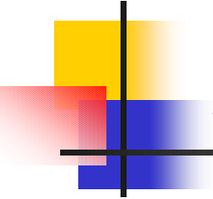
1. **Target Audience:** high sensation seekers
2. **Message Design:** high sensation value prevention messages to reach high SS
3. **Pre-Campaign Research:** focus groups, extensive pretesting of ads
4. **Purchase & Placement:** Purchase TV time in high sensation value shows to air prevention messages



Targeting: Ad Campaign

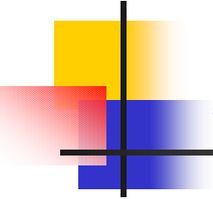
“Two Cities” Study

- Lexington, KY & Knoxville, TX
- Controlled time series design with switching replications
- 100 adolescents/month for 32 months in both cities ($n = 6,371$)
- Baseline data: 8 months prior and 8 months after



Anti-Marijuana Campaign

- 7th through 10th grade initially
- Same cohort for 32 months
- Systematic random sampling with geographic and grade stratification
- In-home interviews
- Laptop administration (sensitive items)
- Parents could not be in the room



Anti-Marijuana Campaign

- Lexington:

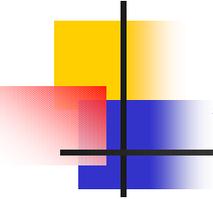
 - Campaign 1: January to April, 1997

 - Campaign 2: January to April, 1998

- Knoxville:

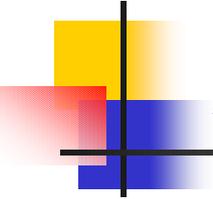
 - Control: January to April, 1997

 - Campaign 1: January to April, 1998



Anti-Marijuana Campaign

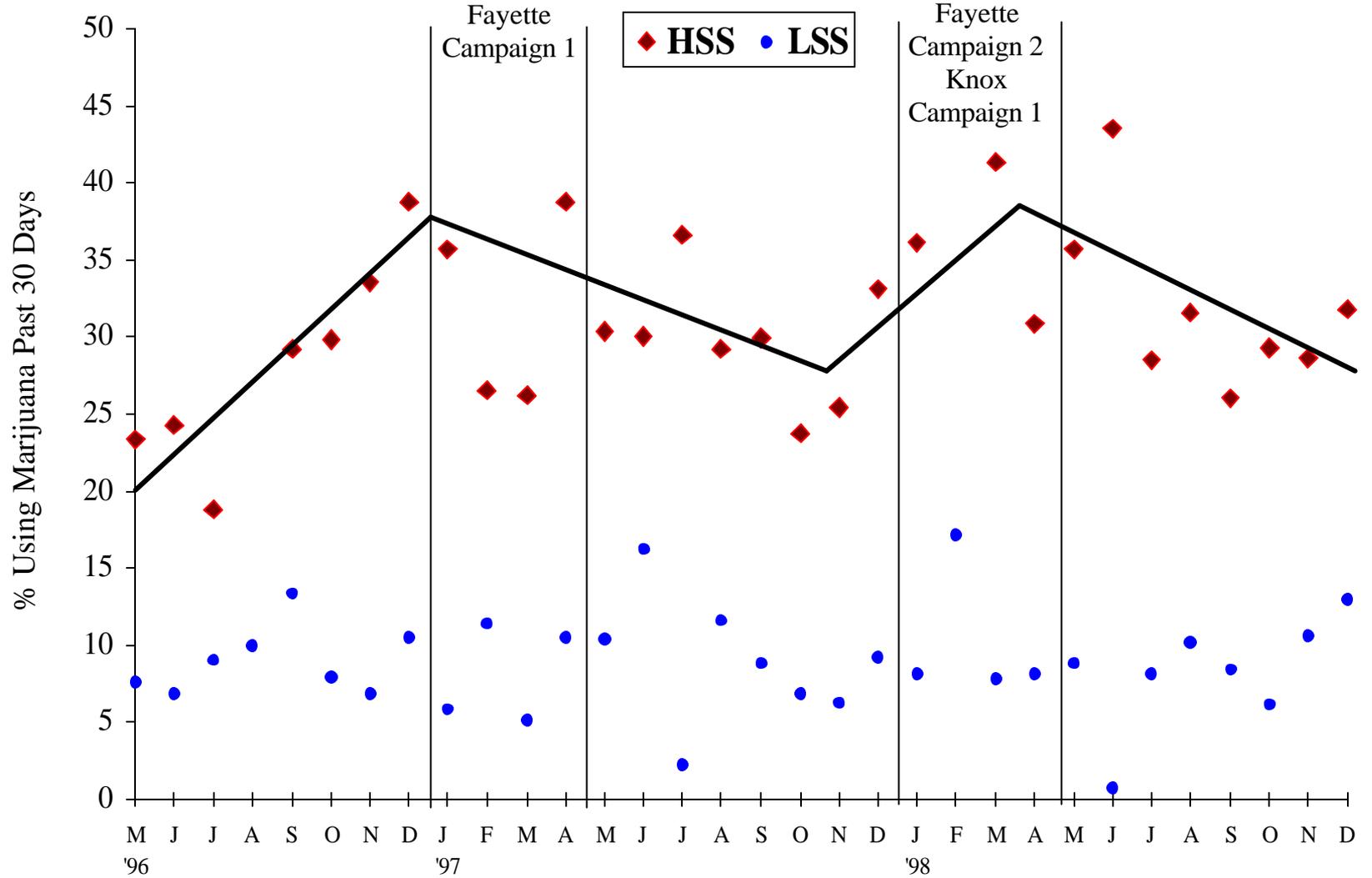
- 4 month TV ad campaign
- 5 professionally produced HSV PSAs
- 3 Partnership for a Drug-Free America HSV PSAs
- Purchased \$60,000 advertising time
- Equal donated time
- Strategically placed ads



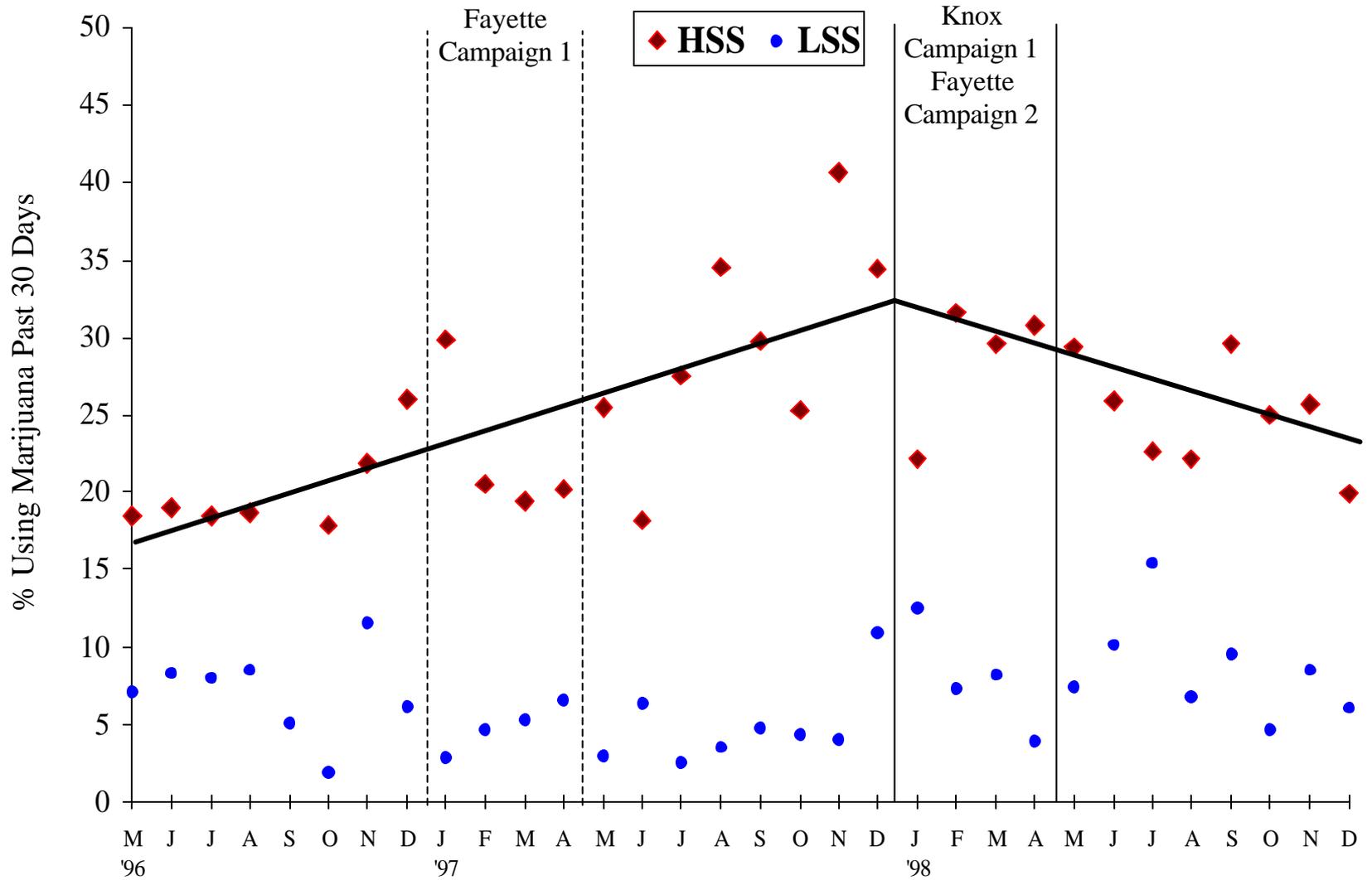
Advertising Frequency

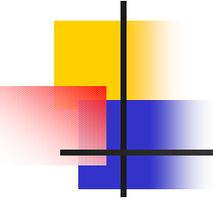
- 753 paid PSAs
- 1,245 donated PSAs
- ~500 PSAs/month
- ~114 PSAs/week for 17 weeks
- 70% of targeted group exposed to 3 campaign ads per week

Fayette County



Knox County





Campaign Worked?

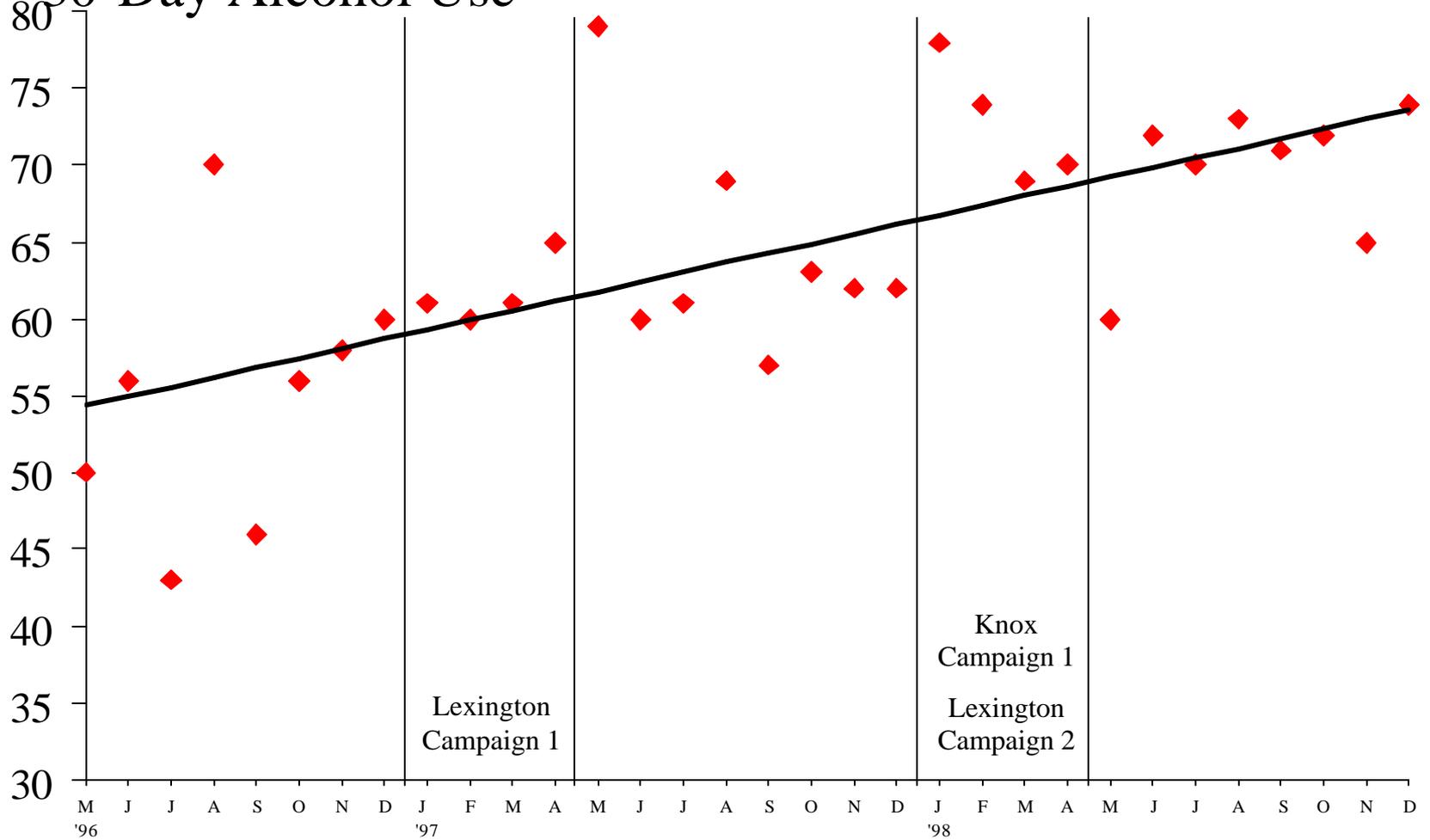
- Yes, teens in the the control county (Knox) **increased** marijuana use while the campaign county (Fayette) **decreased**

AND

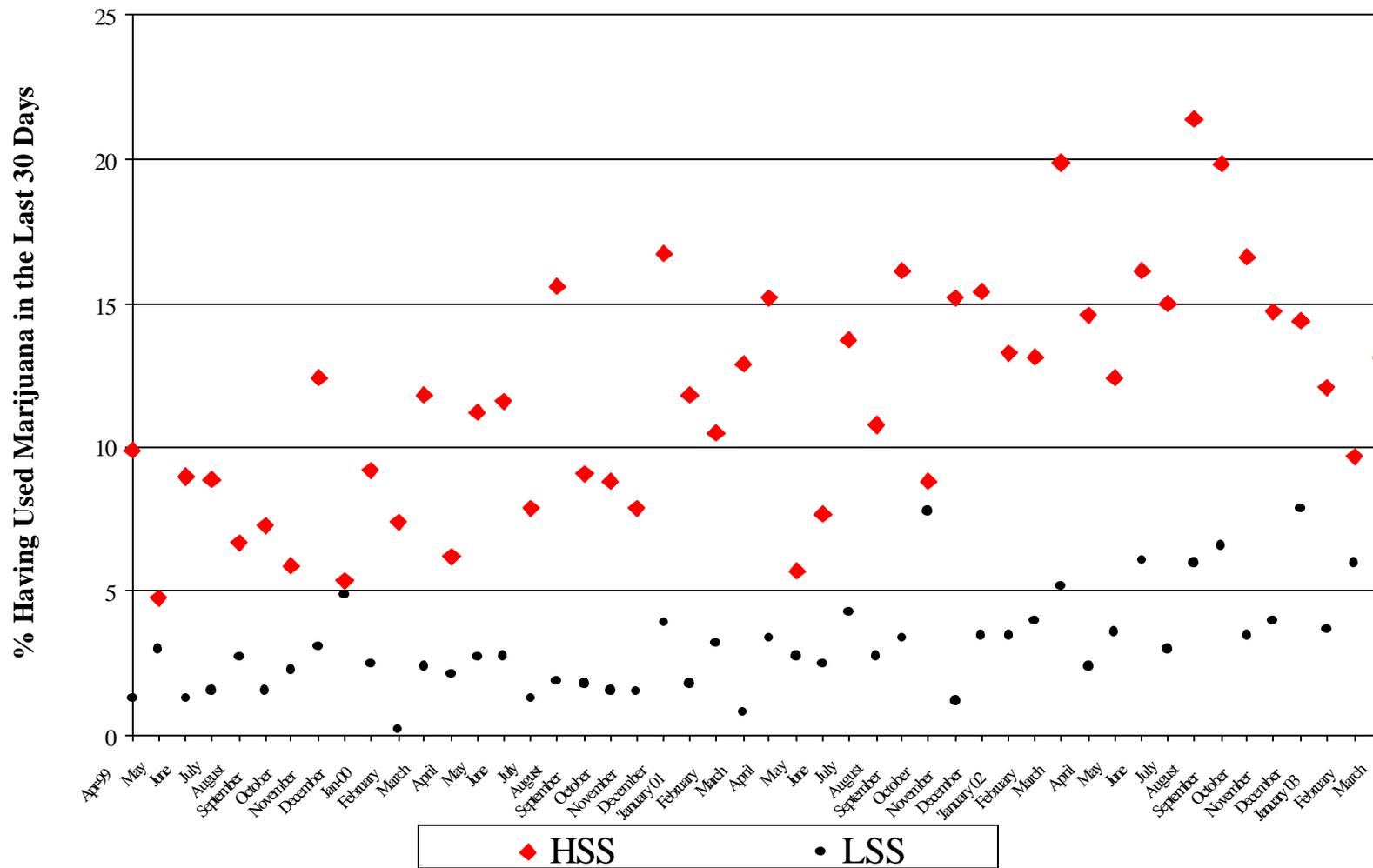
- Other substances (alcohol, tobacco) continued to increase

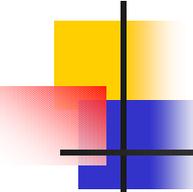
Fayette County HSS

30-Day Alcohol Use



ONDCP Fayette and Knox County 30-Day Marijuana Use

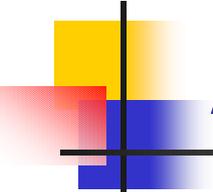




Articles

Campaigns and Effects

- Palmgreen, P., Donohew, L., Lorch, E. P., Hoyle, R. H., & Stephenson, M. T. (2001). Television campaigns and adolescent marijuana use: Tests of a sensation seeking targeting. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*, 292-296.
- Palmgreen, P., Donohew, L., Lorch, E. P., Hoyle, R. H., & Stephenson, M. T. (2002). Television campaigns and sensation seeking targeting of adolescent marijuana use: A controlled time-series approach. In R. Hornik (Ed.) *Public health communication: Evidence for behavior change* (pp. 35-56). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Palmgreen, P., Donohew, L., Lorch, E. P., Rogus, M., Helm, D., & Grant, N. (1991). Sensation seeking, message sensation value, and drug use as mediators of PSA effectiveness. *Health Communication, 3*, 217-227.
- Stephenson, M. T., Morgan, S. E., Lorch, E. P., Palmgreen, P., Donohew, L., & Hoyle, R. H. (2002). Predictors of exposure from an anti-marijuana media campaign: Outcome research assessing sensation seeking targeting. *Health Communication, 14*, 23-43.
- Stephenson, M. T., Palmgreen, P., Hoyle, R. H., Donohew, L., Lorch, E. P., & Colon, S. (1999). Short-term effects of an anti-marijuana media campaign targeting high sensation seeking adolescents. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*, 175-195.



Articles

Theoretical Perspective – Activation Model

Donohew, L., Lorch, E., & Palmgreen, P. (1991). Sensation seeking and targeting of televised anti-drug PSAs. In L. Donohew, H. E. Sypher, & W. J. Bukoski (Eds.), *Persuasive communication and drug abuse prevention* (pp. 209-226). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

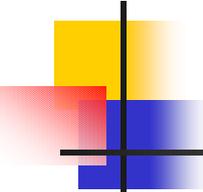
Donohew, L., Lorch, E., & Palmgreen, P. (1998). Applications of a theoretic model of information exposure to health interventions. *Human Communication Research, 24*, 454-468.

Donohew, L., Palmgreen, P., & Duncan, J. (1980). An activation model of information exposure. *Communication Monographs, 47*, 295-303.

Measurement

Hoyle, R. H., Stephenson, M. T., Palmgreen, P., Lorch, E. P., & Donohew, L. (2002). Reliability and validity of scores on a brief measure of sensation seeking. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*, 401-414.

Hoyle, R. H., & Stephenson, M. T. (in press). The sensation seeking scale for adolescents. In R.D. Lennox & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Applied psychometrics for health outcomes research*. Chapel Hill, NC: Chapel Hill Press.



Articles

Mediators and Moderators

- Stephenson, M. T. (2003). Examining adolescents' responses to anti-marijuana PSAs. *Human Communication Research, 29*, 343-369.
- Stephenson, M. T. (2002). Sensation seeking as a moderator of the processing of anti-heroin PSAs. *Communication Studies, 53*, 358-380.
- Stephenson, M. T., & Palmgreen, P. (2001). Sensation seeking, message sensation value, personal involvement, and processing of anti-drug PSAs. *Communication Monographs, 68*, 49-71.

Message Sensation Value

- Morgan, S. E., Palmgreen, P., Stephenson, M. T., Lorch, E. P., & Hoyle, R. H. (in press). The relationship between message sensation value and perceived message sensation value: The effect of formal message features on subjective evaluations of anti-drug public service announcements. *Journal of Communication*.
- Everett, M. W., & Palmgreen, P. (1995). Influences of sensation seeking, message sensation value, and program context on effectiveness of anticocaine public service announcements. *Health Communication, 7*, 225-248.